

## Readings, Hymns and Propers for 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Fourth Sunday of Advent

### Hymn

The Angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;  
'All hail', said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,  
most highly favoured lady.'

Gloria!

'For known a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
all generations laud and honour thee,  
thy son shall be Immanuel, by seers  
foretold; most highly favoured lady.'

Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,  
'To me be as it pleaseth God', she said,  
'My soul shall laud and magnify his holy  
name': most highly favoured lady.

Gloria!

Of her, Immanuel, the Christ was born  
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,  
and Christian folk throughout the world will  
ever say, 'Most highly favoured lady.'

Gloria!

*Basque Carol, Charles Bordes (1863-1909),  
Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)*

**Collect:** God our redeemer,  
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of your Son:  
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour,  
so we may be ready to greet him  
when he comes again as our judge;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### A Reading from 2 Samuel

Now when David, the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.' But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' Now therefore you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you, David, that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

*2 Samuel 7.1-11,16*

**Gospel:**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

*Luke 1.26-38*

**Post Communion Prayer:** Heavenly Father,  
 who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary  
 to be the mother of the promised saviour:  
 fill us your servants with your grace,  
 that in all things we may embrace your holy will  
 and with her rejoice in your salvation;  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord

**Hymn:**

O little town of Bethlehem,  
 how still we see thee lie!  
 Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
 the silent stars go by.  
 Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
 the everlasting light;  
 the hopes and fears of all the years  
 are met in thee tonight.

O morning stars, together  
 proclaim the holy birth,  
 And praises sing to God the King,  
 and peace to men on earth;  
 For Christ is born of Mary;  
 and gathered all above,  
 while mortals sleep, the angels keep  
 their watch of wondering love

How silently, how silently,  
 the wondrous gift is given!  
 So God imparts to human hearts  
 the blessings of his heaven.  
 No ear may hear his coming;  
 but in this world of sin,  
 where meek souls will receive him, still  
 the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem  
 descend to us, we pray;  
 cast out our sin and enter in,  
 be born to us today.  
 We hear the Christmas angels  
 the great glad tidings tell:  
 O come to us, abide with us,  
 our Lord Emmanuel.

*Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)*